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Teacher Cadet Training Agreement Signed By BESE/CERT, Board of Regents Offers Endorsement

The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education today signed an articulation agreement with the Consortium for Education, Research, and Technology of North Louisiana (CERT) that will allow high school students who complete the BESE-approved Teacher Cadet program to use that high school course for credit toward an education degree at any participating CERT institution. CERT is a twelve-member association of postsecondary institutions in North Louisiana (see details on CERT and list of members below). The Teacher Cadet program is a statewide, BESE-sponsored initiative to encourage high school students to become teachers.

The agreement was also formally endorsed by the Louisiana Board of Regents. Both actions came during today's joint BESE/Board of Regents meeting in Baton Rouge.

"This agreement is an important step in our continuing effort to encourage young people statewide to choose education as a career," said Louisiana Superintendent of Education Cecil Picard, who signed the agreement on behalf of BESE. "By allowing these courses to articulate from high school to college, we're both making it attractive for students to enroll in the Teacher Cadet program, and we're giving them a head start on their path toward the classrooms of Louisiana." Picard said that while today's agreement specifically covers only CERT member institutions, he hopes that other Louisiana colleges and universities will follow suit. For BESE's part, the agreement covers all public school districts in the state.

"I've said on many occasions that Louisiana can't hope to reach its social and economic potential until every child in every classroom in the state has a caring and competent teacher. If we're going to realize that goal, we need to encourage our young people to choose teaching as a career. Today's agreement directly addresses that need. I applaud CERT for spearheading this effort, and I commend the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and CERT for their action," said Commissioner of Higher Education E. Joseph Savoie.

The agreement's three major provisions are as follows:

- The Louisiana Department of Education agrees to provide official site certification for those high school Teacher Cadet programs that meet a measured standard of quality
- The post-secondary institution agrees to award credit in a manner consistent with current procedures for accepting transfer credit or course substitutions.
- The post-secondary institution agrees that the credit awarded will be for a core Education course that is required for a degree in Education.

“The Teacher Cadet articulation agreement represents a bold initiative to provide Louisiana with quality teachers.” said Dr. Randall Webb, CERT President and Northwestern State University President. “Every year, we need more than 2,200 teachers and we must recruit young people into the field who are committed to the continued improvement of the educational system. To compete for the best, we must develop career pathways that attract young people. Our efforts today do just that. This agreement signifies the first time in the history of our state that colleges, universities, and local school systems have joined together to create a seamless pathway for young people entering the field of teaching. It is a win-win situation for all of us – students are attracted into quality education programs at our colleges and universities. Quality students become quality teachers who benefit our young people. In turn, our schools become magnets for attracting and retaining business and industry to our state.”

CERT was organized in 1996 to promote and facilitate the development of a workforce prepared to excel in science and technology industries, and to facilitate research and development conducive to those industries. In addition to its involvement with the Teacher Cadet initiative, CERT is an active associate member of the Southern Growth Policies Board, a 14-state economic development initiative. And, recognizing Louisiana’s need for increased expertise in the emerging field of bioinformatics (the development and application of computer-based methods of discovery, analysis, interpretation, prediction and modeling to biological and medical data), the Consortium formed the CERT Institute for Biomedical Informatics, which coordinates biomedical and biotechnology research with education in these growing fields. CERT was also instrumental in helping attract Red River Pharma, a high-tech pharmaceutical manufacturer, to Shreveport’s InterTech Park. CERT serves as the focal contact and broker of specialized education/training services to the company.

The nine participating CERT institutions are: Bossier Parish Community College, Centenary College of Louisiana, Grambling State University, Louisiana State University in Shreveport, Louisiana State University HealthSciences Center-Shreveport (LSUHSCS), Louisiana Tech University, Northwestern State University, Southern University at Shreveport, and The University of Louisiana-Monroe. CERT’s membership also includes the Biomedical Research Foundation, Centenary College, and LSU Health Sciences Center - Shreveport.

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